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AUTHOR Kingsbury, Nancy M.
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ABSTRACT

As large numbers of women enter the labor force, decision making and power processes have assumed greater importance in marital relationships. A sample of 51 (N=101) dual-career couples were interviewed to assess independent variables predictive of process power, process outcome, and subjective outcomes of decision making in dual-career families. A process-oriented model of joint decision making served as a basis for questionnaires and interviews. Data were gathered by self-report questionnaires and a conjoint, tape-recorded interview. The context variables, i.e., sex-role preference disparity (SRD), self-esteem disparity (SED), mutuality disparity (MUD), marital-satisfaction disparity (MSD), income disparity (IND), education disparity (ED), occupational-status disparity (OD), and length of marriage (LM), were obtained from self-report questionnaires. Process variables included: (1) who initiated an issue; (2) the proposition which was made; (3) supporting strategies; (4) importance of the matter; and (5) response of the reactor. Multiple regression analysis showed sex-role preference was the single most important predictor of process power, showing a negative relationship. Sex-role preference disparity, mutuality disparity, and income disparity were most predictive of subjective outcomes, and sex role disparity and income disparity had a significant positive relationship with subjective outcome. Mutuality disparity had a significant negative relationship with subjective outcome. The findings suggest that the process-oriented model of decision making is an effective tool for the study of family interaction, and that one of the most important indicators of marital power is marital decision-making. (Author/JAC)

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AN ASSESSMENT OF DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES IN DUAL-CAREER MARRIAGES

BY

Nancy M. Kingsbury, Ph.D.
Department of Family Studies
Faculty of Human Ecology
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3T 2N2

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The purpose of this study was to assess which of a group of independent variables were most predictive of the following dependent variables: (1) process power (PP), (2) process outcome (PO), and (3) subjective outcomes (SO) of decision making in dual-career families. The purposive sample consisted of 51 (N=101) dual-career couples.

A process-oriented model of joint decision making served as a basis for the questionnaires and interviews used in the study. Data were gathered by self-report questionnaires and a conjoint, tape-recorded interview. The context variables--sex-role preference disparity (SRD), self-esteem disparity (SED), mutuality disparity (MUD), marital-satisfaction disparity (MSD), income disparity (IND), education disparity (ED), occupational-status disparity (OD), and length of marriage (LM)-- were obtained from self-report questionnaires. Couple disparity scores were calculated by the subtraction of wives' scores from husbands' scores on each variable except sex-role preference disparity in which the husbands' scores were subtracted from the wives' scores.

Process variables, which were collected during the interview, included (1) who initiated an issue, (2) the proposition which was made, (3) supporting strategies, (4) importance of the matter, and (e) response of the reactor. A process-power score for the couple was calculated by the response of each spouse to the other in conjuction with a score based on the saliency of the issue. Process outcome was measured by spouse responses on a continuum from consensus to conflict regulation.

Subjective outcome was measured by responses on a continuum from resentment to satisfaction.

The statistical procedure used was multiple regression. The findings were as follows: (1) SRD was the best predictor of PP; the relationship was negative; (2) SRD, MUD, and IND were most predictive of SO; (3) SRD and IND had a significant positive relationship with SO; and (4) MUD had a significant negative relationship with SO.

Conclusions were that the process-oriented model of decision making is an effective tool for the study of family interaction. In addition, it was suggested that sex-role preferences is the single most important variable in the study of the process of decision making and that one of the most important indicators of marital power is marital decision making.

KEYWORDS:

decision-making

processes

dual-career

marriage

Many of the power and decision-making studies have been severely criticized (Cromwell & Olson, 1975; McDonald, 1980) due to conceptual and methodological problems such as: (a) the focus on outcomes instead of processes, (b) the reliance on wife's point of view, and (c) and the use of self-report data collection instead of observational methods. In addition, problems persist in the use of unweighted scores and overall decision-making scores for the husband-wive dyad (Price-Bonham, 1976). Berardo (1980) summarized the problem succintiy: "Many of the pressing problems [in power research] noted in the decade review of the sixties continue to remain unresolved throughout the seventies" (p. 3).

In the November, 1982, Journal of Marriage and the Family, a specialized issue concerning methodology, Hill and Scanzoni presented a process-oriented approach to marital/familial decision making. The basis of the model was that certain context variables (tangible resources such as education, occupation, and income; self-esteem; sex-role preferences; household characteristics such as age, number of years married, number of marriages, race; and marital satisfaction) were influential upon the decision process and eventual outcomes of decision making. The emphasis was on the disparities (differences between spouse's on these context factors). For example, it is the difference between spouses' income levels that affects the decisioning process. In addition, the model emphasized the importance of feelings of mutuality or evaluation of prior decision making to subsequent decision making. It was suggested that this process-oriented technique was an improvement over the "final-say" ones which have emerged since the early Blood and Wolfe (1960) presentation of "resource theory."

Hill (1965) pointed out that "During the 1960's marital decision making was treated as one of the most important (if not equivalent to) indicators of marital power" (p. 22). This interest in "family power" was stimulated largely by Blood and Wolfe's (1960) Husbands and Wives which included their resource theory (McDonald, 1980).

> Blood and Wolfe's assertion that marital power was no longer based on patriarchal notions, but rather on "comparative resources" was a specific way of describing the long-term movement from fully to partially structured relationships. (Scanzoni, 1979, p. 298).

Concomitant with the demise of structure-functionalism, decision-making and power processes have come to the forefront of marital relationships in at least the last two decades as large numbers of women entered the labor force. As dual-career families increase in number, alterations in the dynamics of family interaction are eminent. At the very core of the changes inherent in the dual-career system is a new emphasis on gender-role norms and decision-making processes. This study focused on these issues from both a theoretical and empirical perspective.

BACKGROUND AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Resource Theory

According to Scanzoni (1979), most American and European research is in accord with Blood and Wolfe's (1960) "resource theory," which stated that "the power of husband varies positively with his socio-economic resources (income, education, occupational prestige, or a composite of these variables") (p. 298). It was also pointed out that

wife's participation in the labor force has been empirically found to enhance her power, while decreasing that of her husband.

On the other hand, some researchers have found that increases in husband's economic resources either decreased or had no effect on his power (Scanzoni, 1979). Other findings cited were that wife's employment had no influence on her power.

Rodman postulated a "normative-resource theory" model which was an expansion of resource theory (McDonald, 1980). The theory was based on the assumption that marital power is affected by not only the resources of the marital dyad, but also cultural norms concerning marital power. Burr et al. (1977) posited several propositions which combined resource theory with normative resource theory to predict a correlation between resources and decision making. After testing several of the propositions, the researchers found that in opposition to Rodman's hypothesis, resources were strongly related to power when norms concerning authority were more patriarchal than egalitarian.

Sex-Role Theory

Evidence exists which indicates that sex-role preference may directly or indirectly affect women's career involvement. For example, Scanzoni (1980) pointed out that "The more years of school people have, the more likely they are to hold modern or egalitarian preferences" (p. 19). Since women with more education are more likely to be committed to careers, one would hypothesize that women who hold careers are more likely to have a modern sex-role preference.

Based on other research, Scanzoni (1980) also reported that women have stronger egalitarian preferences than men. Consequently, one

would postulate that women who have careers would have a stronger egalitarian preference than their husbands, even though career women probably have more egalitarian husbands than do noncareer women.

It has been suggested that the woman who has more power would be more likely to seek employment (Hoffman, 1960). In other words the husband's point of view is more or less influential in view of the relative power of both participants. For example, a husband may prefer that his wife be unemployed, because he feels that he "should" be the "breadwinner" and that her employment depletes his socially accepted role.

Decision Making about the Division of Household Tasks

The division of household labor has received more attention from researchers than perhaps any other aspect of dual-career decision making. One would assume that women who have the power to work on the one hand would have the power to share with husbands household tasks and child care on the other. Numerous researchers have looked at the issue of the division of household labor (Erickson et al., 1979; Faikas, 1976; Lein, 1979; Perrucci et al., 1978; Pleck, 1979; Yogev, 1981). Most agree that career women spend a great deal more time in housework and child care than do their spouses.

Hoffman (1960) conducted a study to investigate the effects of wife's employment on household tasks sharing, decision making, and family power. The study was limited, because the data were collected from mothers and children only, excluding fathers, and decision making was measured in terms of outcomes. Conclusions were that employment affects power structure indirectly by interaction "with the pre-existing

ideologies and personalities of the actors" (Hoffman, 1960, p. 35). These results support the influence of sex-role theory in relation to resources and power in families.

Not only are there differences in the contributions to household tasks, but also in the numbers of hours devoted to careers weekly. Yogev's (1981) research showed that husbands spent an average of 9.4 more hours than did wives on their careers where children were present, while for childless couples, the difference was only 1.5 hours. However, the tradeoff in career/housework hours was not equal. Wives who had children reported their husbands spent 16.0 hours less than they did in housework and 23.1 fewer hours in child care, while childless wives claimed their husbands spent 12.1 fewer hours in housework.

These findings seem to indicate that husbands hold more power than do wives, especially where children are involved. One explanation for the acceptance of this pattern by dual-career wives is that many of the wives stated that they did not believe that their husbands were not doing their share and that they did not expect an egalitarian pattern. In other words, the wives thought the unequal roles enabled them to continue in their traditional roles as the "mothers of the families."

When these same women were asked whether they thought themselves equal to their husbands in intelligence and ability to handle things, the majority believed they were equal. Therefore, the wives saw themselves as having an egalitarian relationship with their husbands in attitude, but not in behavior (Yogev, 1981). It was suggested that perhaps the reason for these discrepancies is that these women were reared under the traditional sex-role ideologies, and have no societal

models for their new dual-career roles.

Pleck (1979) reported that Blood and Wolfe (1960):

> Concluded that husbands' relatively low contribution to household work did not derive from traditional ideology about family roles. Rather, they argued, husbands' low contribution is a rational response to the fact that husbands have fewer resources, particularly time, with which to perform these tasks. (p. 483).

PURPOSE AND LIMITATIONS

The purpose of this study was to assess the value of the independent variables listed below in predicting process power, process outcomes, and subjective outcomes in dual-career marital dyads. The study was limited by the use of a nonrandom sample. The major strength of the research was that it assessed the actual process of decision making and that both members of the dyad participated. Verbatum transcriptions of recorded interviews reduced problems of instrumentation to a minimum. It should be noted that the usual limitations of the personal interview, such as social desirability, were a concern. The belief was that the presence of both spouses encouraged honesty and openness which would counteract this problem.

VARIABLES

Independent Variables

1 - Education disparity - (ED) - highest number of years of school; wife's score subtracted from husband's score.

2 - Occupation disparity - (OD) - Duncan Occupational Scale; Wife's score subtracted from husband's score.

3 - Income disparity - (IND) - wife's income subtracted from husband's.

4 - Self-esteem disparity - (SED) - Rosenberg Scale (1965) - higher score indicated higher self-esteem. Wife's score subtracted from husband's.

5 - Sex-role disparity - (SRD) - Sex-role preference inventory (Scanzoni, 1980). Higher scores indicated nontraditional attitudes, while lower scores indicated traditional attitudes. Husband's score was subtracted from wife's score.

6 - Length of marriage - (LM) - number of years married to current spouse.

7 - Marital satisfaction - (MSD) - single response on continuum from completely satisfied to completely dissatisfied. Higher scores indicated high marital satisfaction. Wive's scores were subtracted from husband's scores.

8 - Mutuality disparity - (MUD) - indicated spouse's estimation of other's (a) cooperativeness, (b) trustworthiness, (c) fairness, and (d) empathy. Higher scores indicated high mutuality; lower scores represented lower mutuality.

Dependent Variables

1 - Process Power - (PP) - Relative ability of the members of the dyad to affect or resist change in relationship to the individual salience of the matter.

2 - Process Outcomes - (PO) - Possible outcome scores ranged from consensus to conflict regulation. Higher scores were indicative of the consensus end of the continuum.

3 - Subjective Outcome - (SO) - Subjective outcome scores ranged from satisfaction to resentment. Husbands' and wives' scores were added, with higher total scores indicative of high dyadic satisfaction and lower scores representative of dyadic resentment.

METHODS

A purposive sample of 51(N=102) upper-middle class married, wives were contacted through membership in a professional business women's group. Only those women who were married and currently living with spouse were asked to participate. Other criteria for participation were that both spouses had a high level of continuous commitment to a professional career. The 100 group members unanimously agreed to involvement in the study; 50 eligible, based on the above criteria.

Letters of orientation were sent to the 50 couples who were eligible. In order to set up a date for the couple interview, interviewers initiated contact by telephone approximately one week after the letters were mailed. Eleven of the 50 potential subjects could not be contacted due to absence for business travels or changed addresses.

Consequently, to add to the size of the sample, the Junior League of Greensboro was contacted and 14 couples from that group who met the dual-career criteria volunteered to join the study. The total sample included 51(N=102) dual-career couples who resided in the area of Greensboro, North Carolina.

Range of ages was from 27 years to 65 years (mean = 40 years). Of the subjects 18 (36%) of husbands and 19 (37%) wives reported one previous marriage. Years married ranged from one to 38 years (mean = 12.7 years).

Twenty-five couples had from one to five children under 18 years of age currently living with them (mean = 1.32 children). Highest educational levels of husbands were: a) high school diploma, two (2%); b) some college, seven (14%); c) college degree, 17 (33%); d) some graduate work or master's degrees 15 (30%); and e) law, medical, or Ph.D. degrees, ten (20%). Wives educational levels were: a) high school diploma, two (4%); b) some college, four (8%); c) college degree, 20 (39%); d) some graduate work or master's degree, 16 (31%); and e) law, medical, or Ph.D. degree, nine (14%).

According to the Duncan Index, occupational rank covered a range from 24 to 87 (mean = 66.07 for husbands and 65.91 for wives). Among wives, 76 percent held occupational levels above the 56 level, which indicated professional-type careers. Seventy-three percent of husbands held occupations above the 56 professional level.

The number of hours worked ranged from 25 hours to 70 hours. The majority of both spouses (mean for husbands = 47.0 hours; mean for wives = 47 hours) worked 40 to 50 hours per week. Average income for wives was $25-30,000 and for husbands $35-40,000. Husbands earned approximately 27 percent more income than wives.

Data Collection

Data were collected by self-report questionnaires and conjoint, tape-recorded interviews in participants' homes. The first step in the collection procedure was the completion by both spouses of a confidential questionnaire designed to measure sex-role preference, self-esteem, mutuality, marital satisfaction, length of marriage, income, education, and occupation. Subjects were instructed to go to separate rooms to

complete the instrument and to refrain from communication about questions or answers.

After the questionnaires were completed, the couple rejoined the interviewer for the structured conjoint tape-recorded interview in which the process of decision making was assessed. The final stage of the procedure was for spouses to complete the closing questionnaire separately and privately which served as indicators of subjects' subjective feelings about the process of decision making and their perceived outcomes.

Research Instruments and Measures

A process-oriented model of joint decision making was presented by Scanzoni and Polonko (1980) and Scanzoni and Szinovacz (1980) and used as a research instrument by Hill (1981). The model is dynamic in that it is based on Gulliver's (1979) notions of the repetitive cyclical and developmental sequences of negotiations. Within the model information exchange and assessment aid negotiation to move forward toward consensus and implementation. (For a complete illustration of the model and research instruments see Kingsbury, 1983.)

In the present study a structured conjoint interview was based on the cyclical and developmental sequences of the joint decision-making model. Figure 1 illustrates the units and steps of the decision-making model.

Insert Figure 1 about here

The following discussion outlines the coding, measurement, and calculation of process power. Units I and II (see figure 1) were used to assess the final process power score for the dyad. In steps one and two the initiator (Actor) makes a request or expresses a point of view. Response of Other in step five in relationship to Actor's request was used as the indicator of the process power score in Unit I for Actor. If Other's response in step five is yes (agreement with Actor), code +1, +2, or +3 (Numerals 1, 2, & 3 represent the importance Actors place on the point of view; 1 indicates only somewhat important; 2, important, and 3, very important).

If Other's response is "Yes, but" and Actor made at least a partial gain, code +1, +2, or +3, according to the importance Actor placed on the matter. If Other responds "Yes, but" and no evidence exists that Actor made any gain, code -1, -2, or -3. If Other responds "No," the Actor has made no gain and the code is -1, -2, or -3.

Step two is comprised of Other's proposition and Actor's response. The unit steps and coding are identical to that in unit I. So few couples had units III & IV which were discernable that the study used only units I and II for each couple.

Total Process-Power Score

As a result of a sum of the unit I and II scores, a single score for husband and wife as either Actor or Other was produced. The wife's score was then subtracted from the husband's score which resulted in a total process-power score for the dyad. Higher positive scores indicated process power in favor of the husband and lower negative scores represented process power in favor of the wife. Asymmetrical power

(unequal power) existed when the process-power score deviated from zero. The farther from zero, the greater the degree of asymmetry. Zero scores were indicative of symmetrical power (equal power).

Hypotheses

Process Power

H_1 Among the predictors investigated, disparity in sex-role preference scores will predict the largest proportion of the variance in process power in dual-career couples' decision making.

H_2 Among the predictors investigated, disparities in mutuality scores will predict the second largest proportion of the variance in process power in dual-career couples' decision making.

Process Outcomes

H_3 Among the predictors investigated, disparities in mutuality scores will predict the largest proportion of the variance in process outcomes in dual-career couples' decision making.

H_4 Among the predictors investigated, disparities in sex-role preference scores will predict the largest proportion of the variance in process outcomes in dual-career couples' decision making.

Subjective Outcomes

H_5 Among the predictors investigated, disparities in income will predict the largest proportion of the variance in subjective outcomes in dual-career couples' decision making.

H_6 Among the predictors investigated, disparities in mutuality scores will predict the second-largest proportion of the variance in the subjective outcomes in dual-career couples' decision making.

Data Analysis

The multiple regression technique was used to determine the best predictor among the previously listed independent variables of the dependent variables. In order to test the hypotheses, a separate regression was run for each of the dependent variables.

RESULTS

Table 1 contains the means, standard deviations and correlation matrix for the dependent and independent measures. The mean for PO was 2.3 which indicated that the average score on the continuum of decision-making outcomes was between discussion or negotiation continuing and agree to disagree.

The positive PP score (mean = 1.18) indicated that husbands had a slight advantage in the power arena. The SO mean of 91.2 was representative of high satisfaction scores for the couple as a unit. SRD scores (mean = 4.16) were indicative of wives' more modern attitudes toward sex roles than husbands.

Insert Table 1 about here

The mean of wives' SRD scores was 36.23 and husbands' mean scores were 31.01. These scores suggest that both husbands and wives were more nontraditional than traditional.

Wives held higher educational levels by a small margin (mean = 0.20) while husbands had an equally small margin of higher occupational status (mean = 0.19). Higher incomes were reported by husbands (IND mean = 2.07) and wives reported higher self-esteem scores (SED mean = -1.90). Mean scores on marital satisfaction were almost equal for husbands (4.686) and wives (4.765), and were high for both. Mutuality disparities were small (MUD = -.46) with wives expressing more feelings of mutuality towards husbands than vice versa.

In response to the question, "What is the one thing you disagree about most often?", 14 categories of issues were identified. Issues disagreed about most often were: (a) children (N = 13), (b) money (N = 11), (c) time (N = 6), (d) personal habits (N = 4), (e) household tasks (N = 4), (f) purchase of an item (N = 4), and (g) communication (N = 2). One couple each stated that the following were areas they disagreed about most often: (a) socialization, (b) religion, (c) status of women, (d) sex, (e) jealousy, (f) relations with kin, and (g) vacation choice.

Test of Hypotheses

Process Power - H_1 and H_2. Eight independent variables -- LM, IND, SRD, MSD, SED, MUD, OD, and ED were entered onto a multiple regression analysis with PP as the dependent variable. Table 2 reports the results of this analysis. These eight variables taken together yielded a multiple R of .58, which explains 30 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. Overall, F was significant at the .05 level.

SRD (β = .41) was the only variable with a significant T score ($p < .05$). Consequently, hypothesis 1 was supported and accepted. SRD acores were negatively related to process power which indicated that low SRD couples experienced higher husband power. Although the T score was not significant, the second best predictor of process power was OD (β = .226). The third best predictors were MUD (β = .135) and MSD (β = .133). Hence, hypothesis 2 was rejected.

Insert Table 2 about here

Process Outcomes - H_3 and H_4. In addition to the eight independent variables which were used to test hypotheses 1 and 2, PP was entered also into a multiple regression analysis with PO as the dependent variable.

The nine variables in combination produced a multiple R of .24 which explained six persent of the variance in the dependent variable (See Table 3). The overall F was not significant; thus, hypothese 3 and 4 were not supported. Beta weights for martial satisfaction disparity, sex-role preference disparity, and education disparity were .176, .142, and .127, respectively. Although these were the highest beta weights, none had significant T scores, therefore, no application of results was possible.

Insert Table 3 about here

Subjective Outcome - H_5 and H_6. PP and PO scores were added to the eight independent variables to test hypotheses 5 and 6 with SO as the dependent variable. Table 4 presents the results of the analysis. The ten variables combined yielded a multiple R of .64, which explained 41 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. Overall F was significant at the .01 level.

SRD (β = .42) and MUD (β = .343) had significant T scores at the .01 level. IND (β = .268) was significant at the .05 level. Among the independent variables entered in the regression, SRD, MUD, and IND in descending order were the best predictors of SO. Consequently, hypothesis 5 was rejected, and hypothesis 6 was accepted.

The relationship of SRD with SO was positive and indicated that the higher the sex-role preference disparity of the dual-career couple, the more satisfactory were the subjective outcomes of decision making. MUD had a significant negative relationship to SO ($p<.01$). The lower the mutuality disparity in dual-career couples, the more satisfaction the dyad expressed toward the subjective outcomes of decision making.

The significance level of the positive relationship between IND and SO was .05. The interpretation was that couples with high income disparity have high satisfaction with the subjective outcomes of decision making. Although the significance level of PO ($p<.06$) was slightly above that which was acceptable, it was close enough to warrant consideration. The relationship of PO and SO was positive, therefore, couples who rated themselves near the consensus end of the PO continuum were more likely to have high SO scores which represented high satisfaction.

Insert Table 4 about here

DISCUSSION

As was expected, the dual-career couples in this study represented the upper middle-class with total incomes averaging $64,000 annually. With both spouses working 40 to 50 hours per week, it was no surprise that time was one of the issues disagreed about most often.

The high PO, high SO scores, and high marital satisfaction scores of these couples indicated that, in spite of the stressful nature of this type of lifestyle, the majority of these couples implement effective decision-making processes and have had some success at working out disagreements satisfactorily.

As was mentioned earlier, division of household tasks is one of the areas of concern for dual-career couples. The participants of this study substantiated previous findings as household tasks was one of the issues disagreed about most often. Subjects who initiated the disagreement over household tasks were in all cases wives who wished husbends to participate more. This confirms the previous findings of researchers (Perrucci et al., 1978; Pleck, 1979; Yogev, 1981) who concluded that dual-career wives participate more in household chores than do dual-career husbands.

There was some overlap with household task issues and time management. For example, some of the time conflicts were related to not having enough time to complete household tasks. Since both spouses in these couples work similar hours each week, the Blood and Wolfe (1960) argument that husbands participate less at home because of fewer resources such as time was not supported. Neither were Yogev's (1981) findings supported that dual-career husbands spent more hours on their careers than did wives.

Money was the issue of concern for 21 percent of the couples. Even though the average income of couples was $64,000, and scarcity of the resource was not a problem, decision making about expenditures was a problem.

Process Power and Sex-Role Preference

The results of this study supported the statements of Scanzoni & Szinovacz (1980) that the dynamics of male-female relationships can be best investigated through a "focus on sex roles and decision making" (p. 10). Sex-role preference was found to be an important variable throughout the study.

Hill (1965) pointed out that marital decision making was "one of the most important (if not equivalent to) indicators of marital power" (p. 22). The present study confirmed this notion by the results of the multiple regressions in which eight independent variables were successful in the prediction of process-power scores which emerged from the decion-making process.

The mean power-process score for couples was 1.18 which indicated that husbands had higher power than wives by a small margin. Yogev (1981)

suggested that one reason for the acceptance of unequal power by dual-career wives was that the unequal roles enabled them (the wives) to continue in their tradiaitonal roles.

Resource Theory

Even though husbands in the present study had higher overall incomes than did wives, no evidence was found in support of the Blood and Wolfe resource theory. Neither income, education, nor occupational status was correlated with process power. This investigation substantiated Scanzoni's (1979) discussion of power in which the point was made that some researchers have found that increases in the husband's economic resources either decreasrd or had no effect on his power and that the wife's employment had no influence on her power.

Rodman's "normative-resource theory" which was based on the assumption that marital power is affected by not only the resources of the marital dyad, but also on cultural norms concerning marital power was tested by Burr et al. (1977). Conclusions were that resources were strongly related to power when norms concerning authority were more patriarchal than egalitarian. These dual-career couples were generally nontraditional and had a more egalitarian lifestyle than patriarchal lifestyle. Perhaps, for this reason, tangible resources were ineffectual in the prediction or influence of power in these dual-career couples.

One of the most important findings was that sex-role preference disparity was the best and the only statistically significant predictor of power. This result substantiated the conclusions of Hoffman (1960) that employment affects power structure indirectly by interaction "with the pre-existing ideologies and personalities of the actors" (p. 35).

The negative direction of the relationship suggested that when couples were similar on sex-role preferences, higher power in the relationship went in the direction of the husband. This finding would be expected for those couples in which both spouses are more traditional (have lower SRP scores), but becomes more difficult to explain in those cases where both spouses are nontraditional. The speculation is that couples in this study who had lower sex-role disparity scores were traditional; hence, the negative relationship of sex-role disparity and process power.

Scanzoni and Szinovacz (1980) pointed out that in those couples in which sex-role preference disparities are high, the wife usually has the more nontraditional score and that conflicts are more likely to occur. These dual-career wives had highly nontraditional sex-role preferences; thus, one would expect that where large disparities in SRP existed, the wife was more often the nontraditional of the two. Perhaps, in those couples who have large disparities in sex-role preferences, the wife is less likely to relinquish power to the husband and is more likely to respond to the husband's requests for change negatively. Therefore, in those couples, the husband would have less power.

Subjective Outcome

According to Scanzoni and Hill (1982), "Resignation/resentment are . . . predicted by disparity over income (most strongly), mutuality, and sex-role preferences, and also strongly by objective-outcome disagreements" (p. 20). The present investigation found similar results from the multiple regression in which subjective outcome was the dependent measure. Subjective outcome was predicted best by the same variables

mentioned above, only the strongest predictor was sex-role preference disparity instead of income disparity. The positive nature of the relationship indicated that the greater the disparity, the higher the satisfaction toward the outcomes of decision making.

As was mentioned earlier, one would expect wives in couples with large sex-role preference disparities to be more nontraditional. Concomitant with the previous finding that large sex-role preference disparities predicted reduced husband power, perhaps the present result indicates that these couples are satisfied with this arrangement.

The significant negative relationship between mutuality disparity and subjective outcome were expected. When couples view each other as trustworthy, fair, empathetic, and cooperative in prior decision making, then they naturally express positive feelings of satisfaction over the outcomes of decision making. To put it another way, it is difficult to be resentful toward someone with whom one has had fair and equitable dealings in the past. This finding supports the exchange theory of the "principle of reciprocity."

Income disparity had a significant and positive relationship with and was the third best predictor of subjective outcome. Husbands in the study claimed higher incomes than did wives; therefore, in high-income disparity, the husband usually had the higher income. This disparity probably means that the husband not only has a higher income than the wife, but that the income for the family is high in general. Higher income families can often solve problems through the ability to afford entities which provide solutions. For example, at least one-half of the couples who disagreed about household tasks negotiated and

found consensus by hiring outside help. Consequently, subjective outcomes have a good chance to be satisfactory when couples have the means to solve some problems in this way. Were this income not available, the couple would be forced to deal with the disagreement between themselves, and could result in less satisfactory and more resentful outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study have demonstrated that sex-role preferences are the single most important variable in the study of the process of marital decision making. As sex roles continue to change and dual-career couples increase in number, sex-role preferences will take on an ever-increasing importance in the study of the family.

Findings point to disparities in sex-role preference attitudes as the best predictors of power. Those women with modern sex-role preferences are more likely to be involved in a career and consequently, may have power more equal to that of their spouses. This effect of employment on power is indirectly affected by the sex-role preference. Therefore, it is recommended that sex-role preferences and decision making be included in any studies of family power.

No evidence was found in support of Blood and Wolfe's resource theory. Neither income disparities nor other tangible resource disparities were predictive of process power.

One of the most important indicators of marital power is marital decision making. The successful prediction of power by a combination of variables from a decision-making model illustrates that power can most effectively be studied through the process of decision making.

The findings of this research indicated that mutuality and

subjective outcomes are a salient issue in the study of decision making, because they affect future decision making. The negative significant relationship of mutuality disparity to subjective outcome suggested that prior decision-making history was salient for subsequent decision making.

Conclusions are that the process model of joint decision making is an effective method for the study of the actual processes of decision making. One of the strengths of the model is that it considers the couple as a unit. The model is a distinct improvement over the final-say technique whereby outcomes are viewed as static entities, because it encompasses the dynamics of family relationships and interactions.

Figure 1

Process-Variable Units

Unit I

1. Initiator (who raises the issue)
2. Substantive point (what is being said; proposition made, etc.)
3. Supporting actions (strategies used to support the position)
4. Importance of position to party speaking
5. Response of Other
   - A. "Yes" (Discovery of consensus; Unit I ends)
   - B. "Yes, but" (Development of consensus) Go to Unit II
   - C. "No" (Conflict)

Unit II

2. What is being said by Other
3. Supporting actions by Other
4. Importance of initiating spouse
5. Response of initiating spouse
   - A. If "Yes," unit ends.
   - B. If "Yes, but," units continue
   - C. If "No," units continue

Source: Adapted from Scanzoni & Szinovacz, 1980; pp. 54, 56; Hill, 1981, p. 40.

Unit III, IV, and so on

Table 1

Correlation Matrix, Means, and Standard Deviations

Among Independent and Dependent Variables

	PP	PO	SO	ED	OD	IND	SED	SRD	MSD	MUD	LM	$\bar{X}$	SD
PP		.01	-.12	.10	.30	.15	.13	-.45	.06	-.21	.02	1.18	2.6
PO			.30	.05	-.08	-.02	.04	.08	.15	-.02	.04	2.30	1.0
SO				-.08	.06	.21	-.13	.40	.10	-.22	-.06	91.20	13.6
ED					.43	.17	-.05	-.11	-.08	-.05	.41	-0.20	2.6
OD						.34	.04	-.16	-.16	-.15	.22	0.19	19.6
IND							.20	-.03	-.11	-.08	-.08	2.07	3.1
SED								-.22	-.14	-.11	-.16	-1.90	6.6
SRD									.01	.21	.14	4.16	7.0
MSD										.29	.19	-0.08	1.6
MUD												-0.46	26.2
LM										.18		12.18	10.17

Table 2

Multiple Regression Analysis of Predictors of Process Power in Dual-Career Decision Making

Variables	B	Beta	T
Length of Marriage (LM)	.015	.061	.392
Income Disparity (IND)	.081	.087	.613
Sex-Role Disparity (SRD)	-.151	-.405	-2.898*
Marital Satisfaction Disparity (MSD)	.221	.133	.949
Self-Esteem Disparity (SED)	.009	.023	.169
Mutuality Disparity (MUD)	-.014	-.135	-.964
Occupational-Status Disparity (OD)	.031	.226	1.454
Education Disparity (ED)	-.071	-.071	-.456
(Constant)	1.465		

Analysis of Variance for Total Equation

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Regression	99.936	8	12.492	-
Residual	233.444	42	5.558	2.248**

*p < .01 Multiple R = .5475 R Square = .2997 Standard Error = 2.3575
**p < .05

Table 3

Multiple Regression Analysis of Predictors of Process Outcomes in Dual-Career Decision Making

Variables	B	Beta	T
Length of Marriage (LM)	-.001	-.012	-.066
Process Power (PP)	.024	.062	.341
Income Disparity (ID)	-.005	-.014	-.085
Marital Satisfaction Disparity (MSD)	.113	.176	1.054
Self-Esteem Disparity (SED)	.013	.085	.527
Mutuality Disparity (MUD)	-.003	-.081	-.487
Education Disparity (ED)	.049	.127	.688
Sex-Role Disparity (SRD)	.021	.142	.789
Occupation Disparity (OD)	-.006	-.108	-.576
(Constant)	2.260		

Analysis of Variance for Total Equation

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Regression	2.910	9	.323	-
Residual	47.499	41	1.159	.279

Multiple R = .2403 R Square = .0577 Standard Error = 1.0763

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analysis of Predictors

of Subjective Outcome

Variables	B	Beta	T
Length of Marriage (LM)	-.079	-.064	-.441
Process Power (PP)	-.086	-.018	-.123
Process Outcome (PO)	3.000	.240	1.930***
Income Disparity (IND)	1.197	.268	2.004**
Marital Satisfaction Disparity (MSD)	1.408	.175	1.301
Self-Esteem Disparity (SED)	-.230	-.122	-.945
Mutuality Disparity (MUD)	-.173	-.343	-2.590*
Education Disparity (ED)	-.256	-.053	-.359
Sex-Role Disparity (SRD)	.771	.423	2.941*
Occupational Status Disparity (OD)	-.027	-.040	-.266
(Constant)	79.168		

Analysis of Variance for Total Equation

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Regression	3300.164	10	330.016	2.8736*
Residual	4593.722	40	114.843	

*p < .01 Multiple R = .6466 R Square = .4181 Standard Error = 10.7165
**p < .05
***p < .06

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